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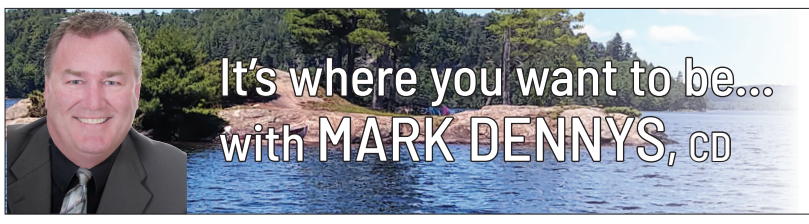

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Graham Reid tackles the trees around his house on Saturday, March 29 as a major ice storm passed through the county. Many residents are still without hydro and phone lines. /photo submitted by Agnes Wywrot

Ice storm slams Haliburton County

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

An ice storm ravaged Haliburton County over the weekend, leaving the vast majority of residents without access to hydro, internet, or phone service. Poor road conditions and declining visibility resulted in a wealth of community events being postponed or cancelled altogether.

The storm began to roll in the evening of Friday, March 28, with sleet starting around 6 p.m. for the majority of the Haliburton Highlands. Freezing rain took shape over the course of the evening, with power flickering on Saturday, March 29. The brunt of the storm hit on Sunday, March 30, with over 85 per cent of Haliburton County residents experiencing power loss.

"Crews are out in full force," said a red flashing notice on the Hydro One website. "More than 257,000 customers have been restored since the start of the storm … At this time, we anticipate it will take several days to restore all customers. We won't stop until every customer is restored."

The site noted that crews prioritize restoration in a way that brings power back to the greatest number of customers in the shortest period of time.

While many knew to stay off the roads, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) noted that they have been significantly busier than usual. "Several trees have already fallen due to the weight of ice, injuring individuals and causing widespread damage," reads an OPP media release. "If at all possible, remain indoors. Roads are hazardous, and conditions are likely to worsen as the freezing rain continues."

see COUNTY page 3

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Municipality seeks community input

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Dysart et al is on the cusp of having the final version of a new and improved Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and are currently in the phase of hearing from community members to move forward.

On March 27, the municipality opened its doors to the public to allow locals to have their say. In the informal open-house setting, attendees were given coloured stickers to identify wants, needs, and interests around specific recreational sites in the area. "This is to give us a clear idea of who is using these facilities, and a way to gather more information,' said Tori Collicut, a representative for the pl.ural consultancy firm, who is spearheading the project. "From this information, we will be able to provide guidelines and recommendations to figure out what's missing, and what works."

This plan has been in the works since September of last year, and the first act of community integration for pl.ural was to connect with "key community members" to hear their thoughts. The firm interviewed thirteen different members of the area; from municipal staff to business stakeholders, and this gave them a general understanding of how to move forward.

From their findings, the consultants then created a community engagement survey, which was open for several weeks, before directing individuals to attend the open house to share their thoughts.

Pl.ural wanted to make it clear that they do not build the infrastructure that's sought after. "A lot of people are asking for a swimming pool," Collicut noted, "and we can't build that, but what we can do, is instead of focusing on 'wants' and 'needs', we recognize values, and why the community has those values."

Collicut shared that a big part of this community consultation component is to properly understand the use for recreational facilities in the area. "If we know who is using these and why they are being used, that would help retain families, and bring more people to Dysart."

The consultancy firm, pl.ural, invited Dysart et al community members to partake in a feedback session to gather information for the upcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan last week. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

Nicole Baumgartner Spooner, a local real estate agent and a member of Haliburton's BIA, was impressed by the turnout of the open-house meeting, which had a steady stream of attendees, often with a line out the door. "This is great," she said. "I enjoy this method of input, and its nice to see so many people here."

Some major themes that pl.ural was seeing from their community feedback is the interest in a local pool, as well as the need for a centralized community centre. They noted there were some smaller centres around the municipality, but they lacked larger rooms.

The manager of programs and events for Dysart, Andrea Mueller, was thrilled with the process for the consultancy so far. "Going forward, the municipality will be able to prioritize plans for parks, recreation programs, and facilities. We will be able to strategize for development, upkeep, funding opportunities, improvements, and collaboration," she said. "I am curious to see if there are new ideas presented for achieving these goals. Obtaining a plan was long overdue, I am happy that we are finally going to have a document to work with."

The consulting firm will be bringing the results of the community feedback sessions to Dysart council, with the final master plan being presented in August of this year.

Public health unit braces against measles outbreak

JAMES MATTHEWS
Staff Reporter

Though there hasn't been any reported measles infections in this area, public health officials are buckling down against its possibility.

The communities served by the Haliburton Kawartha Northumberland Peterborough Public Health Unit do not currently have active measles cases.

From a resource perspective, this is a heavy burden on health units and can easily take away from other public health priorities. Measles is a potentially serious disease that is highly contagious and easily prevented with vaccination.

Elsewhere in the province, there are 350 current cases across 11 health units including neighbouring public health units.

Dr. Thomas Piggott said 96 per cent of those infected were unvaccinated or had only one dose of the vaccine, and that these outbreaks are linked to declining vaccination rates.

"Measles is something that we haven't had to talk about in a long time," he said. "And I had hoped that in my public health career I wouldn't have to talk much about it."

But measles has taken its place among such emerging diseases as whooping cough, Mpox, and the ever-present COVID-19.

"There are a handful of outbreaks and pandemic-related diseases that we've seen," Piggott said. "Really, this is a big part of the reason why we wanted to bring the health units together in a merger."

The Peterborough Public Health Unit joined the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit in January to form the Haliburton Kawartha Northumberland Peterborough entity.

"We knew that at a capacity level through the COVID-19 pandemic, we were challenged," he said. "Unfortunately, one of other merging health unit counterparts, they're whole merger has been largely challenged as a result of dealing with one of the largest measles outbreaks in the province.

"It's become an all hands on deck effort."

Piggott said preparations have been underway that has included ongoing school surveillance, public education awareness, and contact tracing readiness.

Piggott said the outbreak has come as close as Hastings County and Simcoe County.

The challenge presented by a large outbreak like the current one is vaccine effectiveness. Two doses of the vaccine has proven to be 97 per cent effective, he said.

"You start to see break-through cases is what it's called," he said. "And that's what we're seeing here (in Ontario)."

There has been 31 hospitalizations for measles this year in Ontario. One of those patients required intensive care. There has been no deaths.

One child died last year in Ontario due to measles.

"This is a very serious illness for children," Piggott said. "Potentially life-threatening. And the tragic thing is that it is very preventable with vaccine."

However, because measles is so very infectious, a population requires a high vaccination rate to achieve herd immunity.

There are 128 schools under the umbrella of the Haliburton Kawartha Northumberland Peterborough Public Health Unit. In a dozen of those school, vaccine coverage is less than 80 per cent when more than 95 per cent is needed to stop an outbreak.

"Measles can present as a tremendous burden on health units," said Dr. Natalie Bocking. "It is a huge amount of work to respond to even just one measles case."

In the current era where physicians and clinicians are not familiar with measles, one case will go through as many as three healthcare settings before a diagnosis is confirmed, she said.

"And that results in hundreds of contacts that need to be followed up," Bocking said. "So health units have to put entire teams together of call centres, immunization clinics to catch people up."

The Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine is very effective, she said. People receive one dose as infants and a second dose between the ages of four and six years old.

"Our challenge right now is that during the pandemic there was for a multitude of reasons a decrease in uptake of vaccines," Bocking said. "What we are seeing is still a bit of recovery post-pandemic of either families that weren't able to access vaccines during the pandemic or the legacy of misinformation and hesitancy related of the use of vaccines."

County calls Significant Weather Event

from page 1

The County of Haliburton declared a Significant Weather Event on the afternoon of March 28, which included all four townships. "This declaration may change how or when the County or Municipalities perform their maintenance operations," reads a press release from Angelica Ingram, the manager of tourism for the county, "and may increase the amount of time to bring the roads back to a state of repair."

All schools in Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB), including all schools in Haliburton County, were cancelled for Monday, March 31. "This decision was made for the safety of students and staff, and we are communicating with families now in an effort to give time to make alternative arrangements," said Carolynne Bull, the manager of communications from TLDSB.

For the coming days, Environment Canada is predicting warmer temperatures and increased precipitation. Hydro One will continue to restore power as quickly as they can, and remind the public to stay away from fallen lines. The OPP are continuing to encourage individuals to stay off the roads and indoors to prevent injuries from fallen trees.

As of the afternoon of March 31, the Township of Minden Hills had declared a state of emergency.

/Emily Stonehouse staff

/Adam Frisk special to the Echo

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This is not a 'trade' only Job Fair. We would like to include as many businesses as possible from across Haliburton County. We will also have outdoor space available for any participants who would like to bring larger tools or equipment. The more interactive your space is, the more engaged the students will be.

Questions?
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New doctor lands in Haliburton

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Dr. Sharysse Kayoumedjian has officially started on with the Haliburton Highlands Family Health Organization, taking over the roster from Dr. Tina Stephenson, who retired in 2023. /photo submitted

It hasn't always been a straight-line forward for Dr. Sharysse Kayoumedjian.

She's seen her fair share of the world's corners, but now, Haliburton is home. "Who would have thought that the first place I came to after coming home to Canada would be the place I'd settle?" Kayoumedjian laughed.

And it's been a long time since she's felt settled. Haliburton's newest doctor officially started with Haliburton Highlands Family Health Organization on March 1, 2025. She has assumed all the patients of Dr. Tina Stephenson, who retired in 2023. "Thanks to Sharysse, 1100 patients will have access to a very skilled physician," said Kim Robinson, the executive director of the Haliburton Highlands Health Team. "Her joining our group is a literal blessing. These patients would likely have been unattached to primary care if she did not decide to join our team."

Kayoumedjian originally hails from the Toronto area, but went to medical school in Saba, a small Caribbean island. "A lot of people from Canada and the United States will opt to go there instead of the few Canadian medical schools we have here," she explained. "It was a great experience. Very cute, very safe."

She then started training across the United States: Ohio, Brooklyn, Louisiana, to name a few; "all over the place," she chuckled, "I was constantly moving."

She started with the University of Buffalo to do her residency, right on the cusp of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Shortly after, the requirements to practice in Canada changed with the spiked need for physicians, and Kayoumedjian was able to transfer back to her home country. "I got my license, and I came right home," she said.

Shortly after returning to Canada, Kayoumedjian was scrolling through Facebook and saw a post for a long term care position, which piqued her interest. Upon inquiring about the position, Kayoumedjian was approached by Wendy Welch, the Haliburton County's physician recruiter. "Wendy explained that there was a clinic right in Haliburton," said Kayoumedjian, "so I thought I could give it a try."

Freshly licensed and ready to jump into the role, Kayoumedjian dove in head first at the local clinic in early 2024. "I kept coming and going," she reflected, "and I really, really enjoyed it."

At the same time, she was still based out of the GTA, and was balancing a series of contracts in Toronto and Uxbridge while she took on work out of the Haliburton clinic. "I started to realize that I didn't like the downtown vibe of the city," Kayoumedjian recalled. "I ended up missing the community I had found here. I loved going to work every day here."

She knew then that it was time for a change. And the change worked out for everyone. Kayoumedjian naturally fell into a professional working relationship with the staff and team at the Haliburton clinic, and had a roster of patients ready for her. "We are excited to see our team grow and to continue efforts to meet the healthcare needs of the community," said Robinson. "I would like to thank Wendy Welch for all of her hard work and continued efforts to recruit physicians to Haliburton County, the wonderful patients of our group who made Sharysse's locum experience with us so enjoyable, and to the physicians and staff who welcomed Sharysse and supported her."

Kayoumedjian has a particular interest in women's health, and supporting and advocating for those in need. "I am excited to take care of a group of people who maybe haven't had a family doctor before," she said. She is thrilled about her new position, and looking forward to connecting with the community as her role continues to take shape.

Dysart resident decries STR licensing process

JAMES MATTHEWS
Staff Reporter

People have called the short-term rental regulation and licensing many names derogatory and favourable.

Dysart resident Bill Beatty hung the word 'scam' on the license requirement when he met with township council March 25. Short-term rental (STR) property owners in Haliburton County must get a license from their respective municipality to operate.

"What I'm here for is to talk about this scam of STR licensing," he said. "We need accommodation up here. We might as well put up a sign saying, People don't come to Haliburton County because we don't want you."

Beatty lamented the years past when there were clots of cabins around many lakes that were rented during the summers. There were lodges and rental agencies.

They're all gone, he said.

"There's no place for people to come," Beatty said.

He said one "rental agent" told him about losing 25 per cent of his summer rental stock of cottages.

"That's 25 per cent of people who can't come to Haliburton County this summer," he said.

That's anecdotal evidence of people getting out of the trade, but it has legs. And then there are circumstances of when a property owner who wants to comply with the new rules but doesn't use a computer can't obtain a license because the applications are found online.

"I was a little annoyed," he said of trying to get an application from the town office.

Beatty said he reached out to Mayor Murray Fearrey who provided all the necessary documents and an application.

"Then I started to make out the application form, or put the package together," he said. "Brought it in here to hand it in (at town hall)."

Then he was told the application documents couldn't be accepted at the town office because the staffer who has that duty wasn't in that day.

"Come back in a couple days," Beatty said he was told.

So that's what he did.

He tried to pay the fees by way of a cheque.

"We can't take cheques," he said he was told. "It has to be credit card. Dysart can't take a cheque?"

Well enough, so he fished a credit card out to pay at the machine on the counter.

Hold on now.

"No, no, not the machine," Beatty said he was told. "We just need your credit card number. So I gave them my credit card number. How would you feel about your credit card number being floated around in some computer somewhere?"

Literature indicates the annual STR licensing fee is $500 for operators.

"It's not $500," he said. "It's $515. Where did that other $15 come from? Is that a bribe to the staff to process my application? I like to know where my money goes."

Beatty said he applied for his STR license on Feb. 24 and has yet to see anything about it.

"Does it take a month to process an application for a license?" he said. "And what's going to happen? Are we going to end up in the middle of August, finally getting these applications through?"

Beatty offered to meet with Fearrey at a later time for further discussions.

"That's more than fair," the mayor said. "We'll do that."

"And I think when I do come to meet you, I think there's a couple of the rental agencies would like to come too," Beatty said.

"I'd like to hear from them because I'm just going to question one thing," Fearrey said. "It's 25 per cent down. It's (rental traffic) 25 per cent down because in COVID (lockdown) you couldn't travel out of Ontario. Now people are travelling. They don't always have to come to Haliburton. That's what I hear from the agents I talk to. It's not all because of the STR bylaw."

National realtor sees STR rules affecting cottage market

JAMES MATTHEWS

Staff Reporter

According to a major Canadian real estate company, demand for recreational homes outpaces supply despite economic uncertainty due to the trade war with the United States.

But tighter regulations on short-term rental (STR) properties have dampened prospects in Ontario.

All of Canada's provincial recreational markets are expected to see an increase in home prices this year.

The pandemic-era scramble for recreational properties, once reminiscent of a modern-day gold rush, has eased. And so has the chaos of bidding wars and thin inventories, said Phil Soper, president and CEO of Royal LePage.

"Demand for recreational properties among Canadians, and the lifestyle they offer, remains strong but balanced," he said. "While the mainstream market is more sensitive to economic shifts, demand in the recreational segment remains steadfast, even during periods of market hesitation.

"Many families share the deep-rooted desire to own a recreational home and that is unlikely to change."

In 2024, the weighted median price of a single-family home in Canada's recreational property regions increased 2.3 per cent year over year to $627,700. When broken out by housing type, the weighted median price of a single-family waterfront property decreased 3.6 per cent year over year to $1,063,400 in 2024. The weighted median price of a standard condominium remained flat, rising a modest 0.2 per cent to $431,700 during the same period.

"After three years of double-digit price growth during and after the pandemic, recreational property values have settled slightly below peak for the 2025 season," said Soper.

Demand between 2021-23 for cottages surged as Canadians traded cityscapes for lakefront living amid lockdowns, travel restrictions, and the shift to remote work. That pushed prices to record highs.

Now market is seeing a return to typical year-over-year price growth.

"Looking ahead, recreational property prices are expected to rise modestly, driven by ongoing supply shortages," he said. "New cottages and cabins aren't being built fast enough to meet buyer demand, which will continue to support long-term price growth."

There may be one factor, new to the Haliburton County region, that may dampen prospects.

When cottage owners aren't using their seasonal retreat, many choose to rent it out to help offset operational costs. However, growing restrictions on STRs have made this difficult in some regions.

Soper said the option to rent out your cottage or cabin in the off-season to generate income is becoming increasingly challenging. That's because of tighter STR regulations in many regions, particularly in Ontario, Quebec, and B.C.

"If policies aimed at severely restricting the recreational rental market persist, they risk discouraging buyers and dampening local economies," he said. "Seasonal tourism is a vital contributor to employment, small business success, and regional development in cottage country."

So locally in 2024, the weighted median price of a single-family home in Ontario's recreational property market decreased 1.5 per cent year over year to $640,700 compared to 2023. During the same period, the weighted median price of a standard condominium decreased 5.7 per cent to $468,900.

According to a Royal LePage survey of recreational property experts, 39 per cent of respondents in Ontario reported less inventory this year compared to 2024. Additionally, 46 per cent of respondents reported similar demand.

In the region, 61 per cent of experts said that the average days on market has increased since this time last year.

"The Muskoka region has seen a gradual uptick in its inventory levels, which is good news for buyers who are looking for a specific type of recreational property and want more selection to choose from," said John O'Rourke, a broker at Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka.

But hold on.

"Neither increased supply levels nor lower interest rates have translated into a significant boost in demand just yet, leading to higher-than-usual days on market for this time of year," he said. "Strict short-term rental regulations continue to deter investors and those hoping to lease their properties during the off-season."

As a result, most buyers in today's market are end-users purchasing primarily for personal vacation use, O'Rourke said.

Winterized cottages with strong internet connectivity remain the most in-demand properties, offering the flexibility for remote work.

"In the short term, ongoing tariffs and broader economic uncertainty are expected to keep market activity relatively flat this spring," said O'Rourke.

Speeding Dysart motorists may have to smile, say cheese

JAMES MATTHEWS

Staff Reporter

Dysart council got a clearer picture of what's involved in obtaining and using automated speed enforcement on its roads.

Tanner Watt, a municipal program specialist at Local Authority Services (LAS), told township council March 25 that automated speed enforcement is a fairly simple concept. A camera is situated at roadside and takes a photo of any car that moves faster than the posted speed limit.

The photo captures the car's license plate and the registered owner is ticketed and dinged with the applicable penalty.

Cameras are positioned in Community Safety Zones or school zones.

"It's proven to be a pretty effective tool for reducing speed," Watt said. "One of the nice things about it is it is entirely in municipal control. This is one of the few enforcement tools that you as a municipality and as a council are able control yourselves."

The municipality will be able to lease the enforcement cameras from LAS. The company will install, calibrate, and certify them. The monthly bill to lease a camera is about $3,500. Then there are ticket processing fees.

"Response to any vandalism or any maintenance issues, that's all on us," he said.

LAS has been establishing ticket processing centres. They have one set up and another will be operating in a few months, he said. Tickets from a number of municipalities across the province are processed at the centres.

"We are trying to cluster municipalities just to help support each other as they develop these programs," Watt said.

Municipalities can avail of a contract for a term as short as six months.

Offence notices are under the purview of Provincial Offences Act courts.

"This is the same court that's supposed to give us back money now, right?" Mayor Murray Fearrey said. "We're supposed to get a percentage of provincial fines now on our highways. We've never seen any for the last four years."

He said Dysart used to collect as much as $40,000 from POA offences.

"I don't know what's happened to that," Fearrey said.

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Editorial

Until it's gone

emily stonehouse

FULL DISCLOSURE: I had an entirely different editorial written. It was a shoutout to Dysart, and their efforts towards including others in their Parks and Recreation Plan. They do deserve some kudos for that, and there will be another time to celebrate them.

But this past weekend, so much went out the window.

This past weekend, we watched as the rains fell. All expecting a little ice storm; nothing we hadn't seen before from past times the March Lion has reared its ugly head. We can handle it. We've done it before.

But the rains fell, and they didn't stop. They landed on trees, on rocks, on buildings, on power lines, and they froze.

The first day of the weekend, there was some romance to the cancellations. A bonus day indoors. Movies and popcorn and finishing that book that's been dog-earred for far too long.

But by the next day, during the sprints and spurts where some of us had access to internet, we saw the damage. The vast majority of the county was without power. Estimated restoration time for some (or many) was days away. Network towers seemed to crash. Where we normally had slackened power, at least we could rely on data.

But not this time. No phone calls, no internet, no light.

The wispy warm romance from the early storm days was suddenly replaced by something sharply different: a chilling fear.

We kept our kids indoors. Encouraging them not to take any unnecessary risks today, for we knew we would never get out of our driveway, and a phone call was apparently a luxury of the past.

We started plotting what to do for dinner, for breakfast the next day. How we would stay warm, what we would do.

And it made me realize one thing: we are ill-prepared for this. And maybe others are not. But I think the vast majority of us likely were. And that's something we should change.

Beyond the basics, it took a series of outside the box questions and answers to get this paper together. Gone are the days of stamps and ink, as we live in the simplicity of speed; our documents linked and saved to clouds and servers and online docs.

It's all well and good, until it's gone.

And this weekend, I think we all realized how quickly it can go.

In this day and age of drastically twisting and turning weather, perhaps we should be more prepared to survive. Proper food purchased, heating sources confirmed, documents saved and secured.

The other reminder is just how alone we are when the wires are suddenly cut. A message from my neighbour inviting us over to warm up while our electric heat source sputtered and spat truly made a world of difference. A warmth felt deeper than our bones, but in our hearts as well.

Thank you to the first responders, the hydro workers, and road staff, who needed to leave the comfort of their homes this weekend to ensure we are able to move forward.

Because it's all well and good.

Until it's gone.

Thick ice still piled on branches. It looks pretty, but the damage is drastic across the county. /photo by Emily Stonehouse

Our road

Mrs. McDonald's cow

Down sharon lynch

MAGGIE WAS having a hard time getting their attention. This seemed to happen every time she babysat her two nieces. It was bedtime. But they were so engrossed in their 'devices' that the rest of the world had ceased to exist.

So Maggie decided to try another approach. Walking into the den where the five and seven-year olds were seated, heads down, she made her move. Speaking over the odd little sounds emanating from their small hands, she announced tonight's bedtime story was too scary to tell. That caught their attention.

Maggie explained she knew a true story that wasn't about giants or fairies or anything they'd probably heard before. No, this was about something as ordinary as the road in front of their house. However, the tale was anything but ordinary.

In response, two curious youngsters quickly donned pajamas, brushed their teeth and Maggie found herself snuggled on the couch with an attentive audience.

Years ago, she told them, there had been a large pot hole that appeared like magic every spring. It had probably been there all along but the snow and ice kept it hidden until the world began to melt. That's when people saw it. The first thing they noticed was that every year the pot hole seemed to be a bit bigger.

Here the seven year-old wanted to know why it didn't get fixed. Maggie explained that the roads crew tried but no matter how much they shovelled the road-making stuff into the pot hole, it never filled completely. And then one year, there was a terrible accident. Two small heads looked up at Maggie with saucer-eyes. She paused for dramatic effect.

Asking if they remembered Mrs. McDonald's cow, the one that was always getting loose, elicited vigorous head-nodding. Maggie then questioned if either of them had seen the cow recently. No, they had not.

Well, Maggie told them, there was a reason for that absence, a reason that many people found hard to believe. In fact, she added, they might not believe it themselves. By now the girls were eager to hear more. However they first had to promise that they would not tell any of their friends, for fear of giving them nightmares. They promised. While she did not witness the event herself, Maggie believed it to be true.

Apparently it was a bright sunny spring day, the kind that almost makes your eyes water because the sun is so bright. Here the five-year-old piped up that her eyes never watered but the seven-year-old shushed her. "Cows' eyes are very sensitive to light", Maggie told them. "In fact, the sun could make their eyes blind for a few seconds." At this point she could feel them holding their breath in anticipation.

The year this event took place saw the biggest pot hole ever. No one could remember ever seeing anything like it. And while a few cats had gone missing in the neighbourhood, people thought that was due to a spike in the coyote population. But it wasn't. Because when Mrs. McDonald's cow went for a stroll one morning, it had walked right into that gigantic pot hole and disappeared.

The silence in the den was heavy indeed as the girls took in this information. Then the questions began. Did Mrs. McDonald look in the pot hole? Where did the cow go? Did it ever come back? Maggie handled their questions as honestly as she could. Nothing was ever seen again of Mrs. McDonald's cow.

Thinking the girls had heard enough, Maggie tried to usher them into their bedrooms. Unfortunately, they were now more interested in another story than in sleeping. This had not worked out the way Maggie had anticipated. Perhaps some warm milk and another tale – this time about giants and witches – would do the trick. However after the bedtime snack, the seven-year-old asked Maggie if she knew anything about Mrs. McDonald's chickens. They kept vanishing too. Maybe there was another pot hole somewhere? Maggie's lips were sealed.

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points of view

Diary of a storm

steve galea

Loon Tales

DAY ONE: The ice storm of 2025 has started. I am writing this by candlelight – not because we are blacked out, but rather because I enjoy the ambiance. I record this diary for historical purposes, although, this is dangerous since the first sign of a hack writer is inadvertently confusing the word diary for dairy.

The reader need not worry, however.

Currently, the rain and snow are falling. The cars are coated in ice. Jenn was supposed to visit her grandmother but cancelled due to treacherous road conditions. I consoled her by reminding her how nice it will be to spend every moment, perhaps for days, together. She is now reconsidering.

I am following several weather apps simultaneously, tracking the storm on their radar pages and giving Jenn contradictory updates every three to four minutes. I think she appreciates it. Even so, I'm not sure if I should take, "Get out of here!" as her way of communicating disbelief or as a command.

Day Two: I have received various texts from one of my friends who lives north of Orillia, for reasons difficult to explain. He reports tree limbs falling, a prolonged power outage and the general horror associated when living with young adults who have lost internet access. He fears an outbreak of cannibalism should the pizza delivery service fail. I console him by pointing out that he is over 60, which means he will not be the entrée.

As a precaution, I later approach Jenn and suggest we adapt a vegan lifestyle – which is another indication that cabin fever is setting in.

Day Three: Though we still have not lost power, it has flickered once or twice – although, in fairness, it might also have been me blinking. I tell Jenn the horror is in the not knowing. She quips that I must always be horrified.

Our internet is now unavailable. This means I can no longer keep Jenn updated on the weather. If dancing is a reliable indicator, she is taking it well.

This morning, I took our dog Rosie for a stationary walk. Both of our feet were moving but we did not make any forward progress. Those watching would have thought we had perfected miming a walk against the wind.

Later this morning I will launch an expedition to the end of the driveway where a bag of sand salt mix resides. Currently, we have filled up every bottle, pot, and sink with water, just in case the power does go out and does not come back for several months. In a fit of brilliance, I ensured we did half of them with hot water.

10 a.m.: We are out of cookies. Life is now bleak.

I have suggested that Jenn make us a batch of survival cookies. She has grown snippy.

2 p.m.: We lose power. I tell Jenn she will now have to use her electric toothbrush manually. She tells me it is fully charged. I am reminded why no one likes a know-it-all.

Shortly after sundown: Darkness falls. Inexplicably, we find ourselves suddenly out of candles. The ambiance is horrible.

9:45 p.m.: Our power has returned, thanks to the heroes who work for Hydro One. Unfortunately, the internet is still unavailable so I cannot search to see how old Mary Kate Olsen is. And, after that, search to see how old her twin sister is.

Nevertheless, I have determined that I'd rather have Hydro than the Internet.

It was great to have our power back so quickly, because I was worried about the contents of my fridge, particularly the diary products.

pic *of the* past

This cluster of three buildings was on the south side of Highland Street in the vicinity of the present Foodland driveway. It is believed the centre building was Joe Paull's butcher shop with his house on the left; the building to the right is a boot and shoe maker's shop. At the extreme left is the wall of Anderson's store. This photo can be found in Haliburton: A History in Pictures by the Haliburton Highlands Museum

A message from County CAO Gary Dyke

On March 26, a regular County Council meeting including a public meeting to discuss the application by the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust to the Province of Ontario for the creation of the Milburn Kendrick Conservation Reserve began as scheduled.

As the council and public meeting began, a medical emergency occurred and as a result, the meeting was immediately cancelled. We will not be commenting on the details of the medical emergency at this time.

We appreciate the understanding of members of the public at the meeting, and those watching the meeting online at that time.

We thank the staff and first responders who attended for their care and effort.

The meeting will be rescheduled to another day. When available, rescheduled meeting information will be posted on the County website, on social media platforms and as public notice in local newspapers.

We thank the community for their support during this time.

Submitted

Head Lake Park during the ice storm. /Adam Frisk special to the *Echo*

Vermont forester teaches people how to love their forest

THOMAS SMITH
Staff Reporter

Ethan Tapper presented a talk on How to Love a Forest, using reading form his recent book *How to Love a Forest: The Bittersweet Work of Tending a Changing World.* /THOMAS SMITH Staff

A forester, content creator, and punk rocker walk into Haliburton Forest.

Can anyone hear him?

Well, a filled seminar room at Haliburton Forest on Monday, March 24 sure could.

"Writing books is something that other people do," opened Ethan Tapper. "Certainly, not foresters. We don't do that."

After attending the University of Vermont, Tapper stumbled into a Forestry major after going on a wilderness trip with an ex-girlfriend. Since then, he got hooked on learning about forests and engaging with them as complex ecosystems.

Tapper has worked as an independent consulting forester as well as county forester, advising thousands of landowners. Tapper was also named Forester of the Year by the Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance in 2021. Currently, he has been on tour for his book *How to Love a Forest: The Bittersweet Work of Tending a Changing World* throughout Canada and the USA since September last year.

After presenting his book at Kenyon College in Ohio on March 20, Tapper presented his book in Peterborough to Take Cover Books on March 21, in Peterborough again for the Kawartha Land Trust on March 22, in Haliburton on March 24, and is finishing his brief Canadian stint of his book tour with two dates at Laurentian University in Sudbury on March 25 and 26.

"There was no one out there, writing about these things in the way that I wanted to tell it," said Tapper.

Afterwards, Tapper began writing for one hour every morning. Sentence by sentence, chunk by chunk.

After three years, Tapper finally convinced himself that the heaps of writing scraps that he had banked would one day form a book. In the fourth year, a friend told him to tell everyone that he was writing a book, so then we would be too embarrassed not to finish it. This method worked for him, with the book being picked up by Broadleaf Books and the multi-year editing process began. The book was finally published in September of last year.

While writing his book, Tapper also purchased 175 acres of forest just west of Burlington, Vermont. The forest was heavily degraded, with all of the older, high grade trees on the land being harvested to sell for lumber. All that was left were sickly, low-grade trees. Amongst the left behind trees there was an infestation of Japanese barberry, an invasive species that many audience members said has not spread to Haliburton County yet.

"It would have been a greater kindness to just cut all the trees," said Tapper.

Tapper says that he applied his writing method, little by little, towards tending his forest. By the day or even an hour of his time, he slowly worked towards regenerating his forest.

In June of 2024, Tapper started his own forestry company called Bear Island Forestry.

"Once it seemed that there were only two paths to follow," said Tapper. "A status quo that saw forests and other ecosystems as commodities and an opposing force that sought to protect ecosystems from ourselves, to leave them alone."

Tapper discussed how humans are permanently a part of forests. With the way humans have altered the environment and the need for lumber to build things like homes, the collaboration between humans and forests is a necessity for life.

Tapper says that if you want someone to assess the health of your forest and have them do something about it, call a forester.

"In the forestry world, I am a bit of a unicorn," said Tapper. "And by that, I mean, I like talking to people."

With many foresters getting into the industry to spend time in forests, Tapper says it is rare for foresters to communicate issues with forests.

"The cutting of trees done in the right way, can be this profoundly positive, lifegiving thing," said Tapper. "But if nobody explains to the public who are inherently confused, how are they going to know?"

The tools that are utilized to harvest and cull parts of the forests are the same parts that he has seen give it life, says Tapper. These tools include his Timberjack 230E skidder and chainsaw.

In his talk, Tapper described his land as a 'junkyard of the anthropocene'. A struggling remnant leftover after humans have used, then abandoned the remains.

On his land, Tapper began hunting antlerless deer in order to give young saplings and other plants in the lower levels of the forest. While he was raised not to hunt does, Tapper said he had to cull them as killing bucks does little to reduce deer populations. One buck can mate with several does, but not vice versa. Vermont has also relaxed its bow hunting laws, allowing more people to hunt antlerless deer.

In Tapper's home state of Vermont, predators like cougars and wolves have been extirpated. Without human intervention, the populations will continue to become unsustainable.

"I learned I could love deer and kill deer, that I could love trees and kill trees, and that to do so could be an act of profound courage and compassion," writes Tapper in *How to Love a Forest.*

Tapper finished his talk discussing some of his favourite trees and plants which included sweetfern, lowbush blueberry, and the mighty oak tree, amongst many others.

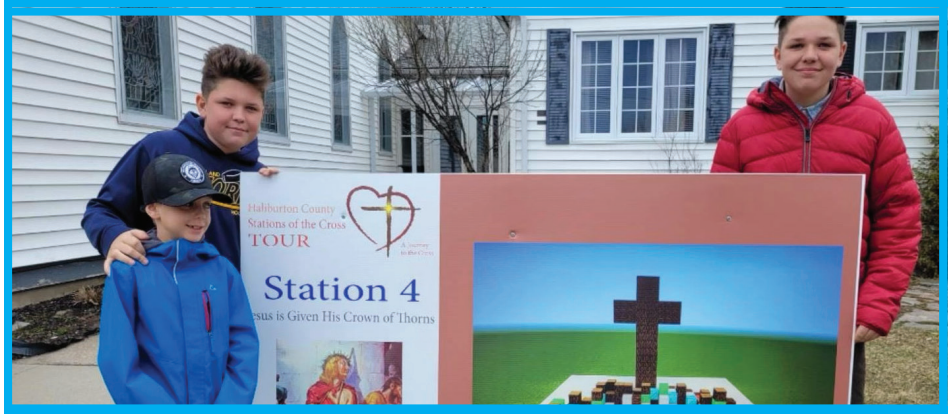
While the ecosystems in Vermont are different from those of Ontario, Tapper says that his talk was to install a sense of hope. His hope is that people will continue to learn about our relationships that we have with forests and accept that in order to show love to them and keep them for generations, we must intervene with some natural processes.

Cutting down trees, killing deer, and digging through the soil may feel like it is causing destruction and causing you distress, but Tapper says that coming to terms with those feelings is necessary in order for his forest to survive.

"At Bear Island, the forest on the mountain lives a life without beginnings or endings," writes Tapper. " Like this world, the forest will always be a mess, always incomplete, always a map of scars. There is nowhere to arrive, no final destination to attain, no endings, and no perfect solutions."

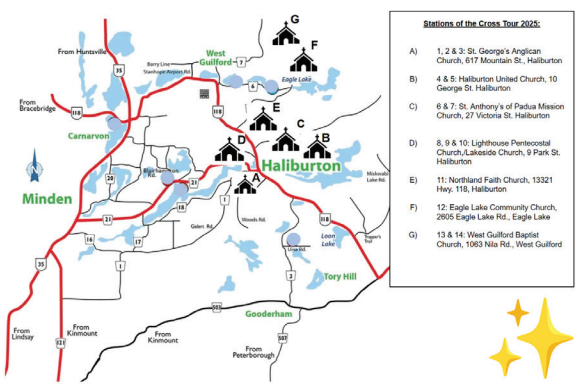
HALIBURTON STATIONS OF THE CROSS TOUR

Where Art & Faith Intersect throughout Haliburton County
April 11 – April 21, 2025



Take a spiritual road trip through Haliburton County and experience Jesus' journey to the cross through stunning local artwork. This outdoor, drive-by, self-guided tour is a chance to reflect, connect, and prepare your heart for Easter.

See unique artwork showcased in front of each church location indicated on the map.


Stations of the Cross Tour 2025:
A) 1, 2 & 3: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St., Haliburton
B) 4 & 5: Haliburton United Church, 10 George St. Haliburton
C) 6 & 7: St. Anthony's of Padua Mission Church, 27 Victoria St. Haliburton
D) 8, 9 & 10: Lighthouse Pentecostal Church,Lakeside Church, 9 Park St. Haliburton
E) 11: Northland Faith Church, 13321 Hwy. 118, Haliburton
F) 12: Eagle Lake Community Church, 2605 Eagle Lake Rd., Eagle Lake
G) 13 & 14: West Guilford Baptist Church, 1063 Nita Rd., West Guilford
Haliburton
Minden
West Guilford
Carnarvon
Gooderham
Tory Hill

Clearing the air on the federal election

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

With the federal election slated for Monday, April 28, the political climate is abuzz with questions and concerns.

In an era where legitimate news sources are blocked on prominent social media channels, where can Canadians go to understand the breadth of the coming election?

The *Echo* took some time to sit down with Jessica Slade, a senior policy analyst for Employment and Social Development Canada, and a lifelong resident of the Haliburton Highlands.

Slade knows the ins and outs of the Canadian government, having been intrinsically involved for the past 11 years, and is no stranger to tackling a neutral stance in an effort to educate voters. "I think you have to put aside the Liberals versus Conservative mindset, and see who can actually help our country," she said.

Hot on the heels of a recent provincial election, in which Conservative Premier Doug Ford secured another four years in power, many are rolling their eyes when it comes to heading to the polls once again. "But these are entirely different," noted Slade.

She likened the comparison of Ford's Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) Laurie Scott and Member of Parliament (MP) Jamie Schmale to different school levels. "It's like an elementary school teacher versus a high school teacher," she said. "There are similar values, teachings, and beliefs, but all in different contexts and environments. The way they spend their days are entirely independent of one another."

Conservative Laurie Scott won the provincial election seat for Haliburton Kawartha Lakes Brock by a landslide at the end of February. As a traditionally Conservative riding, it's no surprise that MP Jamie Schmale has been in his role since 2015, and was the first representative to place his signs locally upon the announcement of the upcoming federal election.

But it's a different election than it has been in the past, and Slade largely cites a circulation of misinformation as the root cause.

For the Liberals, Mark Carney is at the federal helm, in a change in power that seemed to have occurred fairly quickly, leaving some Canadians stumped at the shift.

But this is a move that has happened before. More than once, in fact. The first was Liberal prime minister John Turner in 1984, and the second was Conservative Kim Campbell in 1993. Both had taken over from long-serving prime ministers who were faced with dwindling popularity.

But Slade broke this system down simply: "In an election, you are voting for the party, not the leader," she said. "The Liberal Party of Canada was the elected party, so when Trudeau stepped down, there was a vacant position."

In order to fill this vacancy, an internal vote is required amongst members of the party. Quite literally anyone can become a registered member of the party, and from there, a nomination process is put into place to select a suitable candidate.

Based on his background and experiences as the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Mark Carney was voted in as the leader of the Liberal Party, with over 85 per cent of Liberal members approving.

While this wasn't necessarily the individual who Canadians voted for specifically as Prime Minister, it remains fact that voters elect the political party, not the individual. On top of the Liberals, the other major players in this coming election are the Conservatives, the New Democratic Party (NDP), the Green Party, and the Bloc Quebecois.

"The biggest challenge out there is misinformation," said Slade. "You have to do your research. You can't just share things blindly. It perpetuates misinformation."

While Canadian news is banned on Facebook and Instagram, Slade noted that TikTok currently carries videos from legitimate Canadian news sources. She also encourages voters to visit the official websites for each party, and Elections Canada to find information on your riding. A common misconception is that you need a voter's card to cast your ballot, and while this is accurate for the United States, it is not a requirement for Canadians to vote.

"Plan out your vote," Slade said. "We have enough notice, and some people know they won't be around or are going on trips, but there are other ways to vote in advance, and you need to do your research. There are a lot of ways to make this easy for everyone."

Master's Book Store awaits next chapter

THOMAS SMITH

Staff Reporter

Walking into the Master's Book Store, you are greeted with the latest editions of your favourite authors from wall-to-wall.

Children's books with puppets stick their heads out, like greeters welcoming you in. Their plush and whimsical faces let you know that this is Haliburton's book store and it is for everyone.

As the area's only bookstore, Master's Books remains an iconic and trusted source for books, Bibles, all things literature.

As the hot-spot for reading enthusiasts, customers know owner Kathy Stouffer. A pillar of the community, Stouffer exudes charisma and exceptional customer service. If her book store does not have the title you are looking for, she assures you that she is capable of ordering it in.

Growing up, Stouffer's father was a teacher. With that lifestyle, Stouffer's family lived all over Ontario from Stouffville, to Smith's Falls, to Scarborough.

Her husband, John Stouffer got a teaching job at the high school in Haliburton and the couple moved to the county in 1970. Notably, her husband is one of the last remaining descendants of Archie Stouffer, the namesake of Archie Stouffer Elementary School in Minden.

Master's Book Store originally began as a Christian Book Store, located near Leftovers Restaurant, which some of you may remember in Haliburton.

"The book store is named after Christ, the Master," said Stouffer. "That is how Pat named it."

As a devout Christian, Stouffer attends mass on Sundays at the St. George's Church in Haliburton. It was through this congregation at St. George, where Stouffer learned of Master's Book Store, volunteered her service to Pat and the rest of the ladies involved.

In 1990, Stouffer took sole ownership of the business. Over the years, Stouffer has expanded their offerings from Christian books and Bibles. General books were brought in to cater to a wider audience and become a go-to source for all books.

"We've added more general books, so we qualify as a general book store," said Stouffer. "With a very strong Christian section."

Around 1985, the VanLieshouts welcomed Master's Bookstore into the building in which they are located today.

Stouffer says that she has not seen tariffs affecting the prices of books yet.

"It will only be on books that are printed in the U.S.," said Stouffer,. "And that is going to be very complicated."

Hachette, Harper Collins, and Penguin Random House are three of the largest book publishers that supply books for Master's Book Store. All of them carry Canadian authors and books published in Canada, but they use warehouses in the United States. Stouffer says that this issue may become more complicated as time goes on, as the tariffs may become applied to the books stored in the United States.

While Stouffer does use ebay to gauge the latest fads and interest, special ordering is a large part of her business.

"If I find a book that is an award winner, I will definitely give it a look," said Stouffer, regarding popular book competitions like the Man Booker Prize, Pulitzer, or Canada Reads competition.

"I don't find our readers are necessarily looking for the big winners."

While she does not have much time for reading, Stouffer says that she has been struck by Sharon Garlough Brown's work and is one of her favourites.

"They were fiction, but they were more than fiction," said Stouffer.

General fiction is the most popular type of books at Master's Book Store. Colleen Hoover and Freida McFadden are the two most requested authors by customers. Romance and thrillers are the most popular genres that the store sells the most of. Historical novels have also been quite popular recently, notes Stouffer. Things like war set stories that detail people's lives in history, or the struggles people have faced around the world.

> *"Unfortunately, a lot of people still think that Amazon is the way to go."*
>
> — Kathy Stouffer, Master's Book Store

"In the last couple years, romance has become a bigger market," said Stouffer.

Stouffer says that a majority of the book store's clientele is women.

Some of her clientele are repeat customers to purchase cards, others come to order books for their book club, and some seek a new edition of the Bible for them to reintroduce themselves to their faith.

In addition to books, Master's Book Store sells reading accessories like bookmarks, journals, cards, maps, games, stuffed animals, and puppets.

"Unfortunately, a lot of people still think that Amazon is the way to go," said Stouffer. "Even last week, a couple customers said they were glad I'm here."

With over thirty years of experience in the book selling industry, Stouffer also says that there was a notable decline in sales when e-readers like Kobo became popular.

As a bookstore owner, Stouffer says that she prefers the feeling of a physical book in her hands. However, she could see the appeal of the convenience of taking an e-reader while travelling.

Owing to Master's Book Store's success, the store has utilized Bookmanager software. Bookmanager is a Canadian software company, based out of Kelowna, British Columbia, that is utilized by independent bookstores across Canada and even the rest of North America. The Bookmanager software is responsible for the clear layout of Master's Book Store's website.

Recently, Stouffer has been told of a bookmark made through a collaboration of the largest publishers to show what books are Canadian. Stouffer currently is working on finding a supplier in Ontario to print the bookmarks, which will be available at the store soon.

Like many businesses in Haliburton County, Stouffer says that summer is the book store's busiest season, owing to the influx of seasonal residents.

"We try to keep good literature and local literature," said Stouffer.

Throughout the years, local authors have flocked to Master's Book Store for Stouffer to stock their books.

In recent years, Stouffer has noticed that some authors choose to keep their books only available through Amazon. Many customers request local authors, having heard about books through the newspaper or radio. If any local author is interested in selling their physical book at Master's Book Store, Stouffer is open to stocking it.

The store's landlord has been kind enough to allow the use of the foyer of the Village Barn for book signing events. Stouffer is proud that many authors have not only chosen Master's Book Store to supply their book, but to house special events like signings.

Stouffer says that seeing people find a book they really enjoy and helping people find a Bible they can connect with are her favourite aspects of running the store.

While she has not put much thought into the succession of the store, she is certain that the right person will continue to sell a wide selection of Bibles and other Christian books, in addition to the general books.

Five local stories selected for Let's Make Opera Project

THOMAS SMITH

Staff Reporter

Five stories have been selected for Highland Opera Studio's Let's Make Opera pilot project.

Five stories, straight from the communities that live in Haliburton.

Stories that are funny, heartwrenching, historical, and deeply personal. With the Let's Make Opera project, creating opera truly takes a village.

"Opera is telling human stories," said Project Director Valerie Kuinka.

In December of last year, the Highlands Opera Studio received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their inaugural Let's Make Opera project, offered through the Highlands Opera Community School.

Around 14 stories were submitted and with the overwhelming response from the community, the Opera Studio increased their selection from three to five. Unfortunately, no stories were submitted from Algonquin Highlands.

"We were thrilled," said Kuinka. "Other stories even came in after the deadline."

Storytellers that are involved come from all walks of life, says Kuinka. Whether participants are still in high school, or if they are already retired, there is a great diversity of ages behind the stories being told.

The Let's Make Opera project involves the creation of a libretto, supported by music. The entire creative process is led by those whose stories were chosen. Accompanied by a team of mentors that are available to assist during the project, all aspects of the performance will be crafted by a storyteller of Haliburton County. These performances will include live performers, music accompaniment, costumes, lighting, and makeup. All aspects chosen by the people whose stories are being interpreted artistically.

Kuinka says the operas are intended to be around 20 minutes in length. Currently the groups involved with the project are in the phases of trimming and refining the words, reports Kuinka.

A majority of the participants have not been involved with opera before and do not have professional singing experience. Many have sung in school, in choir, or are musicians, but opera experience is not required for this project.

There are five stages for this project before the final performances in November. After the writing stage, the musical accompaniment will be made.

In the third stage, performers will get involved if necessary (some storytellers want to perform their own opera) including singers, musicians, and direction.

The fourth stage, which takes place from late April to August is adding all of the production elements to the opera. These include costumes, sets, and lighting design. Scripts will continue to be revised throughout this process. Stage management will be incorporated later during this stage.

Stage five involves adding the finishing touches to the performance, with the final performance being scheduled for late November.

Kuinka, project director and co-artistic director has worked in opera and theatre for over 30 years. She has worked as the stage director for the Metropolitan Opera and has also directed productions for Edmonton Opera, Manitoba Opera, Opera de Quebec, Pacific Opera Victoria, and the Banff Centre, among many others.

As a classical violinist, Kuinka has remained active as a chamber, orchestral, studio, and performance artist. As a member of the Canadian Opera Company and National Ballet of Canada, Kuinka played every position before her retirement in 2005.

Lauren Margison is a lead mentor for the project. As a soprano, Margison is a graduate of the Canadian Opera Company ensemble studio and the Atelier Lyrique de L'Opera de Montreal. Her accolades include a 2024 first prize from the Sullivan Foundation, 2018 first place in the George London Competition and the first prize winner of Edmonton Opera's inaugural Ruimbold Vocal Prize, amongst others. In the 2024/2025 season, Margison will be playing the role of Mimi in *La Boheme* with the Opera de Montreal.

Danika Lorèn is a multifaceted performer with a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance and master's degree in Opera Performance from the University of Toronto. Lorèn was a member of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Program from 2016 to 2018. Lorèn has composed over 60 songs and two operas since they began professional composing in 2015. Their work has been presented by the CBC, Canadian Art Song Project, Canadian Opera Company, Pacific Opera Victoria, and the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. Internationally, their work has also been presented at the National Sawdust Theatre in New York and Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ in the Netherlands.

Michael Murphy is another lead mentor. Murphy is a professional percussionist who has toured around the world. Murphy performs as an orchestral musician with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, National ballet of Canada, Esprit Orchestra, Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg. Murphy is also involved with groups such as New Music Concerts, Arraymusic, Soundstreams, Freesound, and Ensemble Scope. Murphy's performance has been captured in the discographies of Paolo Griffin, Russel Hartenburger, and Sophie Dupuis. He is also the featured xylophone-soloist in the hit video game *Cuphead*.

Throughout the project, the mentors and creators will be following a hybrid communication model. As performers and professionals in music, many of the people involved with Highlands Opera Studio maintain connections to city centres like Toronto for work.

All of the languages for the opera performances will be in English. The goal of the project is to allow local creative people to express themselves through opera and reduce the stigmas that opera is only for the rich.

"These stories need to be in the words of the people who are presenting it," said Kuinka.

The Highlands Opera Community School is a branch of the Highlands Opera Studio, a registered charity. The school offers educational, creative, inclusive and fun experiences for residents of Haliburton County to experience singing and performing. These include pay-what-you-can singing lessons, opera appreciation clubs, and the Let's Make Opera project.

The first public workshop performances for the Let's Make Opera project will be taking place on August 9, with the location to be determined.

Currently, the Highlands Opera Studio invites any performers, dancers, musicians, conductors, singers, visual artists, lighting designers, makeup artists, or stage managers to contact the Highlands Opera Studio through email at info@highlandsoperastudio.com or by emailing Kuinka directly at valerie@highlandsoperastudio.com.

Anyone that wants to contribute to these operas, formed from local storytellers are welcome to get involved.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
PROPOSED ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT
TO ZONING BY-LAW 2005-120 OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF DYSART ET AL

- **DATE:** Tuesday, April 22, 2025
- **TIME:** 9:05 AM
- **LOCATION:** Take notice that the public meeting for zoning by-law amendment will take place in Council Chambers in the Municipal Office 135 Maple Avenue, Haliburton, Ontario and in electronic format using Zoom. The meeting will be live streamed to YouTube.

Applications:

Lands of Camp Adelaide Ltd. - File No. D14-ZB-2025-002

Purpose and Effect: The zoning amendment is a result of a recent lot addition for the subject lands. The proposed seeks to rezone a portion of the property affected by the lot addition from Rural Type 1 (RU1) to Waterfront Type 4L (WR4L) to align with the zoning of the existing waterfront properties.

Location: 15372 Highway 118, legally described as Part Lots 29 to 31, Concessions 4 and 5, in the Geographic Township of Dysart, now in the Municipality of Dysart et al.

For more information about electronic meetings and public participation in an electronic meeting, contact the Municipal Clerk at mbishop@dysartetal.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MATTER INCLUDING INFORMATION ABOUT APPEAL RIGHTS: Contact the Planning and Land Information Department by appointment during regular office hours (8:30 A.M-4:30 P.M, Monday to Friday), or by contacting Kris Orsan, Manager of Planning at korsan@dysartetal.ca.

Dated at the Township of Dysart, this 1st day of April 2025.

Kris Orsan, CPT,
Manager of Planning
Planning and Land Information
Municipality of Dysart et al
135 Maple Avenue, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0
Phone: 705-457-1740 ext. 626
E-mail: korsan@dysartetal.ca

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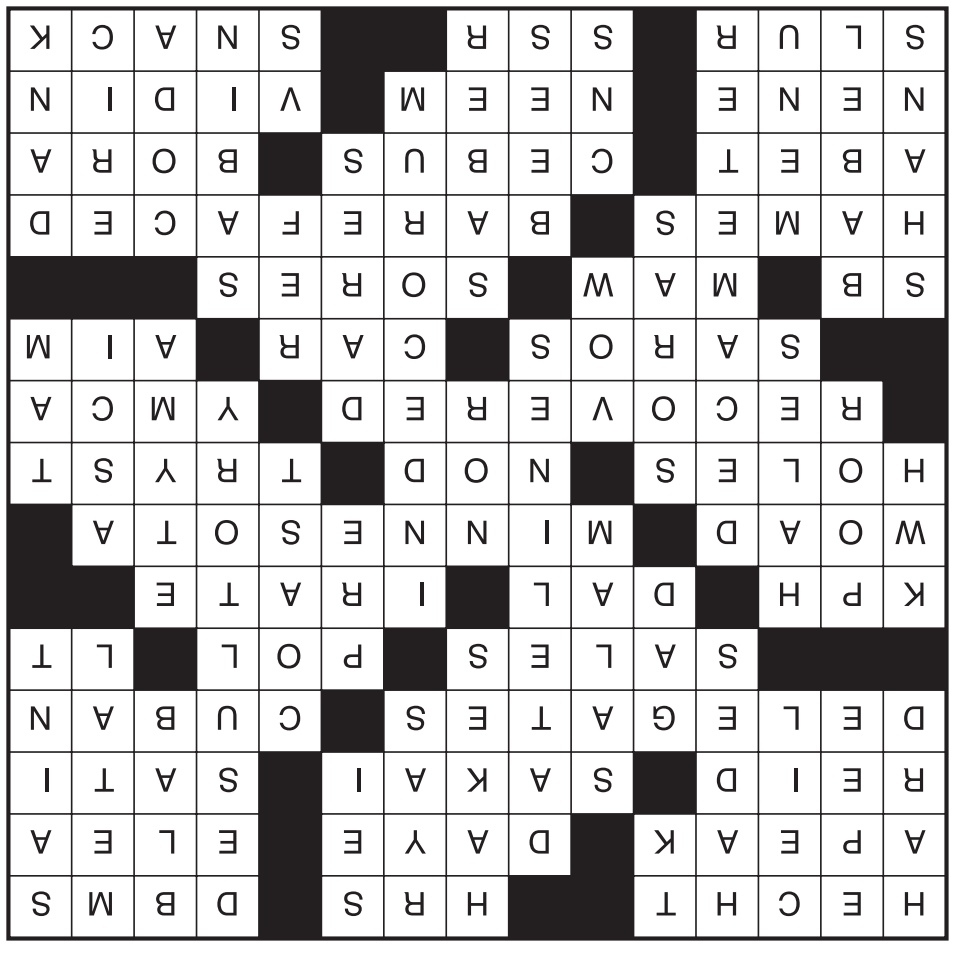


Above, Roger Parsons navigates a slalom course through whitewater. He was dedicated to all forms of adventurous sport; including climbing and paddling.

Parsons lived a full life of adventures and experiences, and peacefully passed away at the age of 94 at the end of December. /photos submitted

Roger Parsons and the legacy of water

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

The man, the myth, the paddler.

Not everyone would recognize the name 'Roger Parsons'.

But thousands of people have been impacted by his legacy of the Minden Whitewater Preserve.

"I believe it's truly one of the things that makes this area unique, certainly in Ontario, and maybe even in North America," said paddler Thom Lambert.

Parsons was instrumental in putting the property on the map. He knew every nook and cranny of the course, and inspired people of all ages to explore the river with a particular zest for adventure. After a full and vivacious life, Parsons passed away in December, 2024.

I never knew Roger, but I knew of the Whitewater Preserve. Everyone does.

It's a destination for paddlers, for hikers, for artists. It's a place where kids camp and wild animals explore in abundance. "There's a real magic to that site," said Lambert. "There are real, physical benefits to being near moving water. But you don't need to know that to understand that it just makes you feel better."

Sometimes when I would go, there would be someone meditating, someone jamming out on an acoustic guitar. Every so often, it would be completely quiet, and whatever problems I brought with me, seemed to flow away with the river.

So when Roger Parsons passed, I knew I needed to dive in.

But much like the ebbs and flows of the river itself, the story brought on some surprises. What started as one interview quickly flowed into another, and another, and another. The many people whose lives were shifted and changed by the simple presence of Parsons grew and grew.

A legend, a pioneer, a visionary, a friend.

I heard those terms, over and over again as more people were looped into the conversation.

In 1977, Parsons happened upon five pieces of land in Minden that were up for sale. As someone who had explored the world with a paddle in his hand, he saw the potential. "He single-handedly built a movement," said Claudia Kerckhoff-Van Wijk, a world-renowned paddler and the owner of OWL Rafting on the Ottawa River. "He was a real organizer."

Van Wijk grew up with Parsons and his family, her own parents paddling alongside Parsons, and continuing to instill the love of the water into her, and now her own children. A legacy.

She noted that his love for "all things adventure" was truly immeasurable, and his early days of exploration started as a climber. He ventured all over the world; the Alps, Africa, Europe, and the western Canadian provinces. He did the first documented ice climb of the Eagles Nest in Bancroft. It was through people he met via the Alpine Club - an organization dedicated to climbers - that he dove into water sports as well.

And if there's one thing I've learned, it's that when Parsons dove into anything, he did it with everything he had.

Van Wijk shared that Parsons had been a long-time scout leader in the 1950s, and went on to found the Ontario Voyagers Kayak Club, as well as the Mohawk Rod and Gun Club. Through these organizations, he taught hundreds of scouts how to navigate the world of whitewater.

While he was a world-class paddler himself - having participated in world championships on more than one occasion - his real passion lay in the development and teaching of the sport to future generations.

Gary George crossed paths with Parsons in the early 1990s. At the time, Toronto had a bid to host the Olympics, and St. Catharines was on the roster to host the whitewater stream. Of course, Parsons was involved in the conversations, at this point being intrinsically interwoven into the national whitewater community. "He seemed to prefer to sit with me, we talked on the side often," said George, who was on the planning committee for the potential Olympic development. "I think of that as the beginning of our friendship."

When George moved to Minden in 2002, his relationship to the Whitewater Preserve formally took shape. As a die-hard paddler himself, George dove into the magic of Minden, weaving his way up as a casual volunteer, to head instructor, to property manager, and every step in between.

"The Preserve changed my life," he said. "It does that. It has affected so many people in positive ways. It spins off better people for having been a part of it."

And George credits the value of the Preserve to Parsons. "What made Roger different was his unrelenting tenacity for all things whitewater," he said. "He knew every icon of the sport during his active years as a paddler."

The Minden Whitewater Preserve was not always the way it looks today. Upon his initial purchase of the plots of land surrounding the river, Parsons set about fundraising to modify and adjust the rapids in order to accommodate appropriate whitewater challenges.

The alterations made the site world-renowned, hosting annual slalom races, provincial and national competitions, World Cups, and in 2015, the Toronto Pan American Games.

"Roger got to watch the world come to his vision in 2015," said Van Wijk in reference to the Pan Am games at the Whitewater Preserve, officially putting Minden on the map.

"There is not one venue like it on earth I'm aware of," echoed George. "Paddlers compete there every year, they all have the same comment: 'I've never seen anything quite like it'. Roger quite literally gave the area a globally unique gift that has the power to build community like few things I have ever experienced."

The centre at the Minden Whitewater Preserve was officially renamed the Roger Parsons Centre in 2008, and in 2013, a book by the name of Building a River … Following A Dream: The Roger Parsons Story was published to celebrate the elaborately adventurous life of Parsons, and the legacy he created.

Parson's celebration of life is scheduled for April 5, 2025. It will be held at the Steckley-Gooderham Funeral Home in Barrie, with the visitation starting at 11 a.m. Donations to the Salvation Army will be accepted in lieu of flowers.

Through it all, it comes down to paddling. "The legacy of Roger lies in the continuity of local paddlers," mused Van Wijk. "We need more paddlers, and once they try it, they would fall in love with it. It's just so magical there."

While the river ebbs and flows with twists and turns, there's much more than what's simply on the surface. More depth, more stories, more songs, more adventures.

Exactly what Roger would have wanted.

A true legacy.

Highlands Museum's newest curatorial assistant settling in well

THOMAS SMITH

Staff Reporter

In two weeks, Zachary Warne will celebrate his inaugural year of working as the curatorial assistant with the Haliburton Highlands Museum.

Born and raised in Toronto, Warne is no stranger to the area, having been involved with Kilcoo Camp for 12 years, later becoming involved with their leadership program.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Warne came to work in Minden during the summer while completing his studies at OCAD in painting and drawing. He also worked at the Beer Store in Minden, staying on his family's property. During this time, he fell in love with Haliburton County.

"I knew that I had to work up here," said Warne.

Warne's favourite style of painting was landscapes before attending OCAD, but while studying and following his creative impulses, began to experiment with abstract texts with vibrant colours. Throughout his BFA, Warne took some electives that discussed aspects of curatorship, the art of displaying objects, and how to represent stories behind objects.

After returning to Haliburton County, he has been struck by the beauty and rawness of the landscape, inspiring him to return to painting landscapes.

Having grown up learning about the Group of Seven, Warne says that the landscape of Haliburton has truly captured his heart.

Before working for the Haliburton Highlands Museum, Warne sold his artwork at the Art and Craft Festival, and worked in the Rail's End Gallery.

"Haliburton has a huge artist community," said Warne. "It is thriving here and I knew this is where I wanted to be."

While visiting the area with his father, Warne saw an advertisement for the curatorial assistant position in the newspaper.

"It just so happened to be the right place, right time," said Warne.

While being interviewed for the gig, Warne says that even Mayor Murray Fearrey joined the interrogation.

"With him coming in, I knew that this museum is a very serious thing to this community," said Warne.

Warne says that he loves making people interested in history though how certain objects are presented and why they are chosen to be highlighted on display.

Zachary Warne will soon be celebrating his first year as curatorial assistant with the Haliburton Highlands Museum. /photo submitted

Currently, the Haliburton Highlands Museum has a World War II exhibit with artifacts from the front lines of soldiers that returned to the Haliburton area. Warne says that he has spent a good amount of time pondering a retelling of this exhibit to reflect the ideals and mindset of the people that were left in Haliburton during the war, including how women filled the roles of men that were gone and how the town contributed to the war effort.

"Steve left me some pretty big shoes to fill," said Warne.

Warne assures that the former curatorial assistant, Steve Hill, has left an excellent base for him to learn and work off of.

"I'm still learning," said Warne. "I still have a lot to learn before I can replace Steve."

"Steve connected with people at quite an intimate level," said Warne. "Every person that walked through those doors, he connected with every one of them."

Zach says that many regulars to the museum, including a group of watercolour painters that have been coming to the museum for years, are now considered close friends.

The objects that interest Warne the most are things that people used in their everyday lives, such as the printing press used for decades at the *Haliburton Echo*, and butter moulds.

Warne says that one of the biggest differences that he has noticed about the Haliburton community, compared to Toronto, is the amount that people care about their community. Recently, he has worked on an upcoming exhibit about the Women's Institute and the Rotary Club. Compared to the coldness and selfishness commonly found within Toronto, Warne says that Haliburton fosters a sense of pride in the community. When an issue is apparent, the community is able to come together and make the changes they want to see.

A part of Warne's job is to educate visitors while stationed at the museum's historic farmstead in Glebe Park.

Being immersed in nature and seeing the wonder on children's faces is something that Warne loves about being stationed at the farmstead. While Steve Hill demonstrated blacksmithing techniques to visitors, that demonstration is currently on hold. Warne says that he has plans to take classes at Fleming College to develop those skills and it will be something offered again in the future.

"As a kid, I used to love changing my space and room out. I love changing up the displays and the items out," said Warne with a laugh.

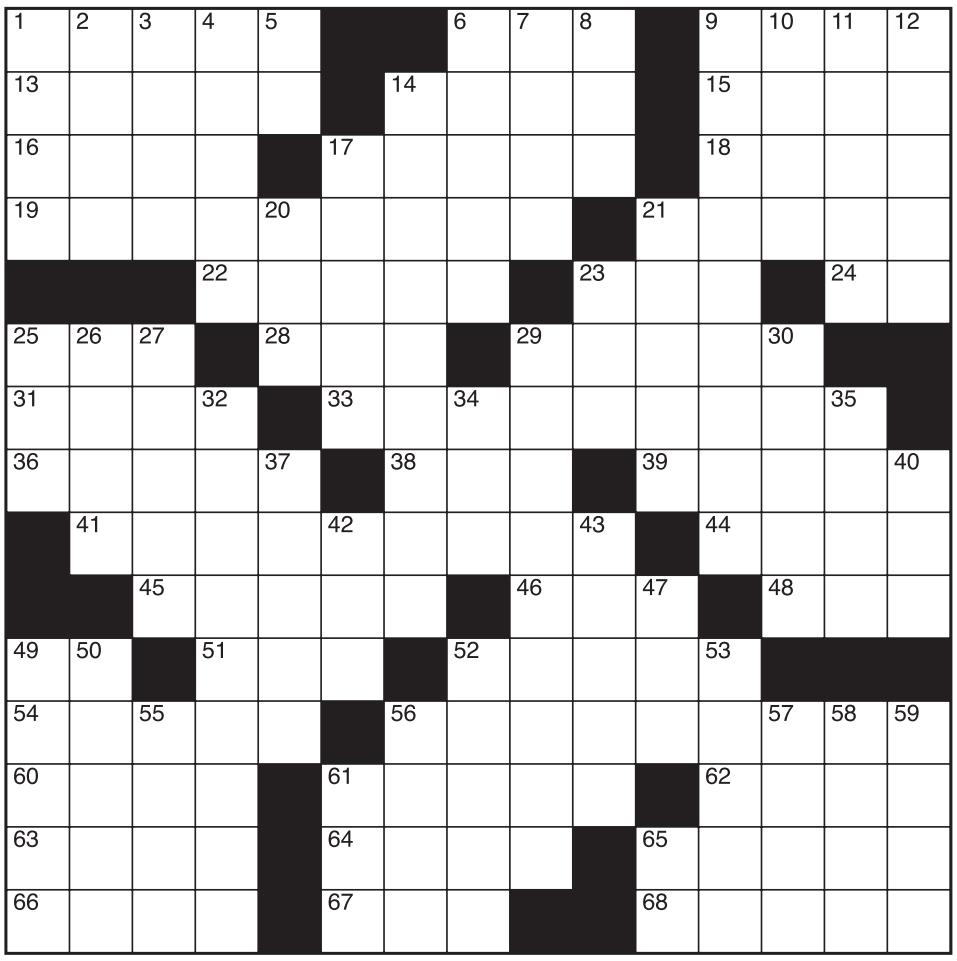
"We've got a lot of new displays going on," said Warne. "There are always new things to look at."

Admission to the Haliburton Highlands Museum remains by donation, something that Warne loves, as it allows all members of the community to access their local history.

The Haliburton Highlands Museum is tucked away at 66 Museum Road in Haliburton and open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Warne welcomes everyone for the community to come by, check out the museum, and say hello.

"Every day, this job is different," said Warne.



CLUES ACROSS
1. Two-person German submarine
6. 60-minute intervals (abbr.)
9. Database management system
13. Vertical position
14. American jazz singer Irene
15. Ancient Greek City
16. Former Senate Majority Leader Harry
17. Japanese seaport
18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
19. Assigns tasks
21. Beloved type of cigar
22. Discounts
23. Cambodian communist leader Pot
24. Important football position
25. Kilometers per hour
28. Lentil
29. Extremely angry
31. Yellow-flowered European plant
33. American state
36. Some are made by rabbits
38. Express with a head movement
39. Affair
41. Cured
44. Youth organization
45. 18-year astronomical period
46. Automobile
48. Focus a shot
49. The NFL's big game (abbr.)
51. Mouth
52. Infections
54. Curved pieces of a horse collar
56. Shameless
60. Assist in escaping
61. Capuchin monkey genus
62. Cold wind
63. Retired Brazilian NBAer
64. Tropical Old World tree
65. Bulgarian city
66. Speak indistinctly
67. Soviet Socialist Republic
68. Between-meal sustenance

CLUES DOWN
1. Not soft
2. Sharp-pointed dueling sword
3. Line a roof
4. Greek god of the underworld
5. Software
6. Large-headed elongated fishes
7. Shag rugs
8. Type of whale
9. Lacking a plan
10. Spill the beans
11. Some is "heavy"
12. One who has been canonized
14. Indicate times
17. Greeting
20. Broadway actor Josh
21. Seashore
23. Indicates before
25. Electrical power unit
26. Destitute
27. Drags forcibly
29. Impropriety
30. Word forms
32. Equal to 10 meters
34. Neither
35. Computer language
37. Practice of aging film or TV characters (abbr.)
40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
42. A promise
43. Challenges
47. Official
49. People living in Myanmar
50. Notable tower
52. Type of sword
53. Vaccine developer
55. Listing
56. Summertime insects
57. Concluding passage
58. Guitarist Clapton
59. Damp and musty
61. Central nervous system
65. Against

Answers on page 10

21

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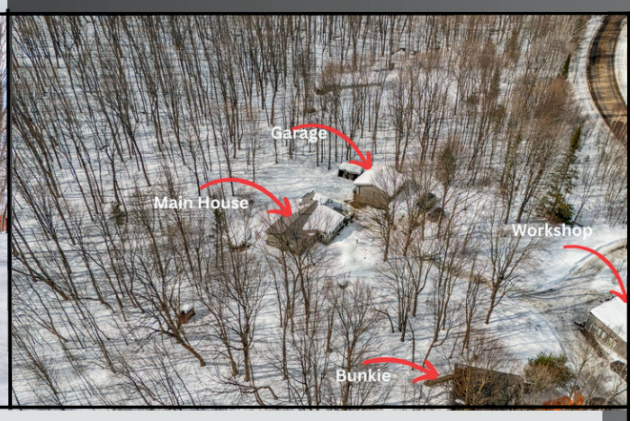

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650 OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Gail Marie Scott

March 13 1941 - March 22 2025

It is with profound sadness that the family of Gail Marie Scott announce her passing on Saturday March 22 2025 into the arms of her beloved Bill.

Gail was a longtime resident of Haliburton and more recently a resident at the Gardens of Haliburton.

Gail is predeceased by her husband of 49 years William (Bill 1941-2010) and will be missed by her children Dale(Stephen) of Belleville, Deanna of Newmarket and Dean(Catharine) of Whitby. Sorely missed by her granddaughters Emalee, Aubre and Lillian. Predeceased by parents Norman & Phebe Shivas(Haliburton) and siblings Dawn and Barry.

Mom was active in the Haliburton community volunteering with Seniors Link and finally knitting childrens mitts for the Christmas Drive at CanoeFM. Mom had knit over 2500 pairs of mitts over the past 11 years.

Born in Toronto in 1941, Gail spent her summers at the family cottage on Outlet Bay of Drag Lake. Summers in Haliburton continued well into the 1990's until retirement brought Bill and Gail permanently to Haliburton.

Heartfelt thanks to dear family friend Merla Russell(and the Glive Girls).

Merla, your friendship meant so much to mom. Thanks to good family friend Cec Bailey. Many thanks to the staff and residents of the "Gardens". You all made Moms time there enjoyable for her.

Special thanks to Dr. Scott Coles and staff. Thanks to Dr. Barbara Clive.

Thank you to Roxanne Casey and the CanoeFM Team, you kept Mom well supplied with wool.

As per Moms wishes there will not be any service. Cremation has occurred and a small family celebration of life will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, a donation to CanoeFM may be made in Mom's memory.

660 CARD OF THANKS

Noel & Jeff Austin would like to extend their deepest heartfelt appreciation to all members of Haliburton's Community Health Care Team for providing outstanding care and support during Andrea's palliative illness.

First and foremost, words alone cannot express the gratitude, appreciation and amazement we have for Dr. Norman Bottum. Your selfless and dedicated commitment is truly amazing. Your expertise and compassion during this tough time, made such a huge and significant impact. You went way beyond the call. A massive thank you!!!

We would also like to give special thanks to all the exceptional individuals from the various divisions of the Health Care Team and friends.

Haliburton Family Medical Center - HHHS (All divisions)
Central East LHIN - PARAMED - Haliburton EMS - Rexall Pharmacy
Community Living & Red Wolves - Hal. by the Lake Association.

Thank you everyone for providing such skilled and compassionate care for Andrea (and Noel). Your commitment to your profession is truly admirable. (Apologies to anyone that was forgotten.)

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ECONOMY

Together again

Province reunites pieces of county in tourism regions

ANGELICA BLENICH
Staff reporter

Residents of Haliburton County can breathe a sigh of relief thanks to the province's recent decision to realign the tourism regions resulting in the county being grouped together in region 11.

The original tourism regions, which were announced in December 2009, had split the county between regions 11 and 12, with Algonquin Highlands placed in region 12 with Muskoka and the remainder of the county in region 11 with Ottawa Valley.

On March 31, Warden Dave Burton received a letter from Michael Kurts, assistant deputy minister of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, informing him that Algonquin Highlands would be reunited with the rest of the county in region 11.

"This is really great news for the county," said Burton, "and I really want to emphasize my appreciation to local MPP

See **Letter campaign** *page 14*

JENN WATT/Echo

Swing into spring

Layla Adams, 2, takes advantage of the warm spring weather Easter Sunday at the park.

BUSINESS

Steinkamp buys Applejack's

JENN WATT
Editor

It was a matter of the right people coming together at the right time.

After rebranding Tracey's Bistro as Applejack's restaurant less than a year ago, Wayne and Heather McMullen were looking to sell the business and retire.

At nearly the same time, new McKecks restaurant owner Maarten Steinkamp came to Haliburton, full of excitement for the potential of the town.

It seemed natural that they should come together.

On April 1, Steinkamp officially bought the business, though not the building, from the McMullens.

"I bought it and invited Nicola [Jowett] … as a partner," Steinkamp said in an interview Sunday.

Jowett is the owner of Heritage House Café and will continue running that business, but will also be a partner in Applejack's.

From the beginning, the McMullens and Steinkamp were good neighbours, despite also being competitors with restaurants across the street from one another.

"[The situation is] amazing … that's really true," Wayne McMullen said in an interview.

See **Many restaurateurs** *page 13*

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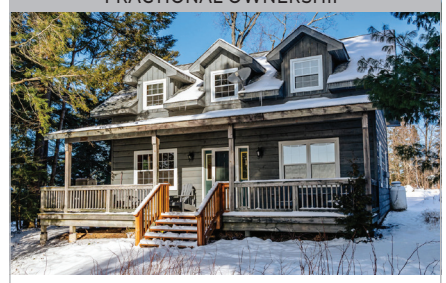

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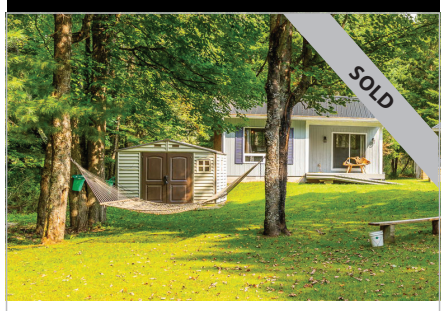

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